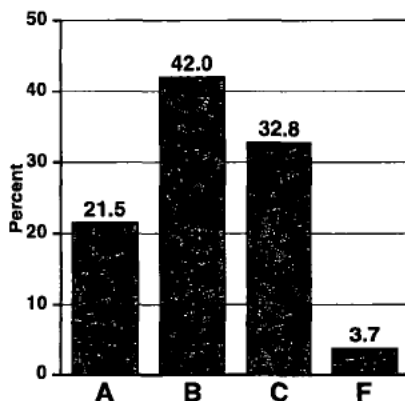


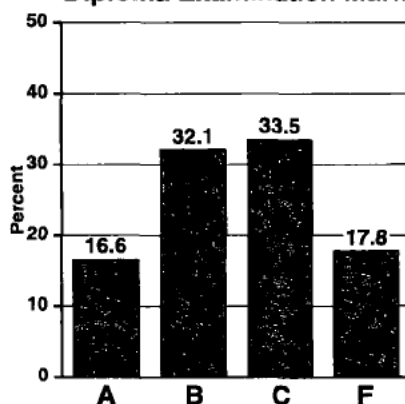
Social Studies 30

Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for January 1998

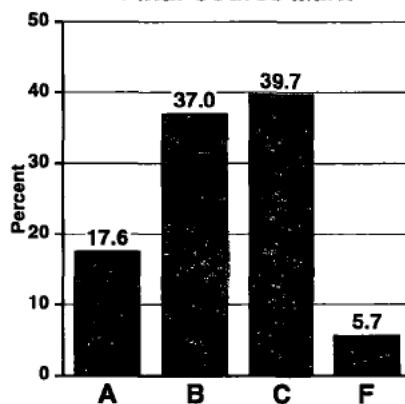
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, and students with an overview of results from the January 1998 administration of the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been provided to schools and school jurisdiction offices. A provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, April, June, and August results is made available annually.

Description of the Examination

The Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a multiple-choice section worth 70% and a written-response section worth 30% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

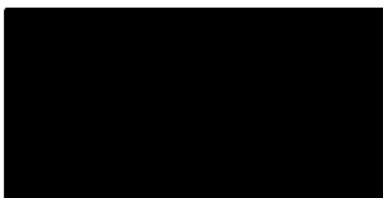
The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 7 967 students who wrote the January 1998 examination.

- 94.3% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 17.6% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Overall, student achievement in Social Studies 30 was satisfactory. Students demonstrated a good understanding of Social Studies knowledge. In composing their essays, many students showed a clear understanding of the issue under discussion, as well as competent skill in developing and organizing an argumentative paper. Students are focusing more than ever on planning, editing, and proofreading their written work.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 68.8%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 63.8%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 66.6%.



Part A: Multiple Choice

Examination Blueprint

Part A: Multiple Choice has a value of 70 marks, one mark for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: by the curricular content area (topic) being tested and by the knowledge and skill objectives required to answer the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in January 1998 according to these classifications.

All questions on the diploma examination require students to demonstrate knowledge of social studies content and to apply social studies skills to that knowledge base. The reporting categories below define the general types of questions that appear on the examination and the categories for which information is reported.

		Question Classification by Topic		Total Questions
		Topic A: Political and Economic Systems	Topic B: Global Interaction in the 20th Century	
		Knowledge and application of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to the world's political and economic systems as outlined in the <i>Program of Studies</i> .	Knowledge and application of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to the interaction of nations since 1918 as outlined in the <i>Program of Studies</i> .	
Question Classification by Knowledge and Skill Objectives	Comprehension of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of generalizations, key concepts, and facts related to social studies content.	1, 2, 4, 9, 17, 18, 27, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35	39, 40, 44, 45, 46, 56, 57, 60, 61, 65, 66, 67	24
	Interpretation and Analysis of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge of social studies content by interpreting and analyzing information and ideas.	6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, 25, 26, 28, 29, 32	36, 37, 41, 47, 48, 49, 50, 53, 58, 59, 63, 69	23
	Synthesis and Evaluation of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge of social studies content by synthesizing information and ideas, and evaluating their accuracy and worth.	3, 5, 10, 12, 13, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24	38, 42, 43, 51, 52, 54, 55, 62, 64, 68, 70	23
	Total Questions	35	35	70

Subtest Results*

Results are reported in average raw scores.

Total Part A: 46.5 out of 70

by Topic

- Political and Economic Systems: 23.3 out of 35
- Global Interaction in the 20th Century: 23.2 out of 35

by Knowledge and Skill Objectives

- Comprehension of Information and Ideas: 16.2 out of 24
- Interpretation and Analysis of Information and Ideas: 15.4 out of 23
- Synthesis and Evaluation of Information and Ideas: 14.9 out of 23

*Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school results.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	B	73.2
2	C	73.7
3	A	82.3
4	B	75.9
5	D	76.6
6	A	65.0
7	A	67.8
8	D	64.1
9	D	66.1
10	B	80.1
11	C	64.1
12	D	62.8
13	A	44.4
14	B	49.0
15	D	60.2
16	C	51.6
17	C	66.0
18	D	61.3
19	D	64.5
20	C	55.2
21	A	79.0
22	C	61.6
23	A	69.7
24	B	65.5
25	D	77.2
26	A	64.4
27	C	63.6
28	C	58.5
29	A	75.6
30	D	61.0
31	B	55.9
32	A	71.2
33	B	69.6
34	C	77.8
35	B	73.4
36	C	66.6
37	B	65.8
38	D	66.2
39	C	52.9
40	D	75.5
41	A	69.6
42	A	63.2
43	D	55.0
44	B	68.4
45	A	86.3
46	B	63.9
47	A	74.7
48	D	68.9
49	C	73.2
50	D	80.4
51	A	70.1
52	D	72.9
53	A	62.3
54	B	66.6
55	D	53.6
56	B	59.6
57	C	60.4
58	C	61.0
59	D	54.7
60	B	72.9
61	C	58.4
62	A	67.6
63	B	81.0
64	D	50.2
65	C	89.1
66	A	69.9
67	D	43.8
68	C	67.2
69	B	64.1
70	B	64.5

*Difficulty—percentage of students answering the question correctly

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results with the provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examiners' Comments

The multiple-choice section of the examination requires students to go beyond simply recalling information and to apply their knowledge and thinking skills. Students must demonstrate that they understand social studies concepts; that they comprehend historical, political, and economic relationships; and that they can interpret and evaluate social studies information and ideas.

During the marking session, markers were asked whether the standards embedded in the multiple-choice questions were appropriate and fair. These teachers generally concurred that this section of the examination set an appropriately demanding standard of achievement for graduating Social Studies 30 students. They found the data sources relevant and engaging and the questions challenging but fair.

The following table gives results for six questions selected from the examination. The table shows the percentage of students, in five groups, that answered each question correctly. The comments on pages 4 and 5 address some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number					
	14	16	22	41	42	55
All students	49.0	51.6	61.6	69.6	63.2	53.6
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	83.8	80.4	81.9	86.8	92.2	83.3
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received marks between 65% and 79%, or B, on the whole examination	59.4	58.8	69.9	75.6	75.6	65.1
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received marks between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	35.6	40.8	55.4	66.3	54.7	42.4
Students who have not achieved the <i>acceptable standard</i> (49% or less) on the whole examination	22.9	32.0	39.1	49.2	29.9	26.4

Use the following editorial comment to answer questions 14 to 16.

After Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan came to power in 1979 and 1980, many a harsh word was spoken about the postwar economic policies pursued by the world's richest countries.

Over the next decade, [they] deliberately walked away from all the policies that had made their countries wealthy and compassionate at the same time.

The postwar rebuilding of the western economies was achieved through the leadership, direction and, where necessary, the direct intervention of governments.

Those postwar governments educated people, looked after public health, took care of the poorest, made sure that the society and the economy had a clear direction.

Thatcher threw it away. To her, and to Reagan, governments were a problem, not a solution. [Governments] got in the way of business [and] stopped the natural functioning of the market. They had to be cut down to size.

—from *The Edmonton Journal*, 1994

14. This editorial comment is highly critical of

- A. interventionist principles
- * B. supply-side economic theory
- C. demand-side economic theory
- D. democratic socialist principles

16. A capitalist would **most likely** categorize the writer as being

- A. radical
- B. moderate
- * C. left-wing
- D. conservative

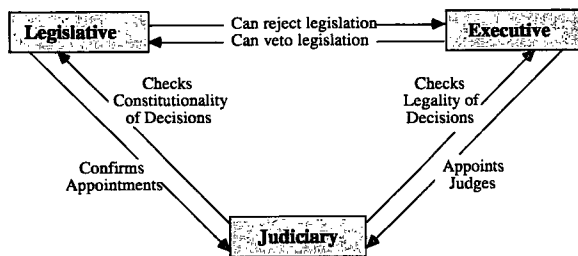
Questions 14 and 16 were two of a set of three questions based on editorial comments regarding the impact of various economic policies initiated by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Question 14 is classified as an Interpretation/Analysis Question and question 16 is classified as a Synthesis/ Evaluation question, both on Topic A.

Question 14 required students to scrutinize and interpret the comments to determine which specific economic direction the editorial writer was criticizing. Students found the question difficult, with 49.0% of all students answering correctly. However, 83.8% of those students achieving the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

Question 16 asked students to both evaluate and categorize the editorial writer's point of view from a particular perspective. Students also found this question difficult, with 51.6% of all students answering correctly. In this instance, 80.4% of those students achieving the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

That 21.0% of all students (Question 14) concluded that the editorial writer is critical of interventionist principles and that 22.7% of all students (Question 16) concluded that from a capitalist perspective the editorial writer is conservative suggests the presence of some serious conceptual confusion.

Use the following diagram to answer question 22.



22. The system of government represented by this diagram is present in

- A. Canada
- B. Sweden
- * C. the United States
- D. the United Kingdom

Question 22 was based on a diagram illustrating the basic framework of the American political system. This question is classified as a Synthesis/Evaluation question on Topic A. To answer correctly, students had to categorize certain key features of the American system of checks and balances. Students found the question somewhat difficult with 61.6% of all students answering correctly (81.9% of those students achieving the standard of excellence). The fact that 31.8% of all students concluded that the diagram represents the Canadian system suggests a failure to recognize crucial details or confusion about the differences among various democratic systems.

Interestingly, a similar diagram and question was presented to students on the January 1994 examination. At that time, only 36% of all students selected the correct response (the American presidential system) and 58.5% of all students incorrectly selected Canada's parliamentary system as the keyed response.

Use the following cartoon to answer questions 41 and 42.



Note: this British cartoon was published in *Punch* magazine on April 5th, 1939.

Questions 41 and 42 were based on a historical cartoon that focused specifically on the tense situation in Europe in the months just before the outbreak of the Second World War. Question 41 is classified as an Interpretation/Analysis question and question 42 is classified as a Synthesis/Evaluation question; both on Topic B.

To answer questions 41 and 42 correctly, students had to demonstrate their knowledge and critical thinking skills by recognizing contextual detail and relating this detail to particular historical developments—details such as the date given for the cartoon, the significance of Hitler's desire to "trespass" (where?), and the symbolic representation of Great Britain as a barking dog.

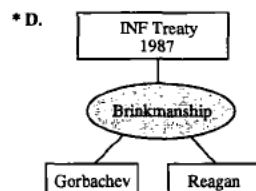
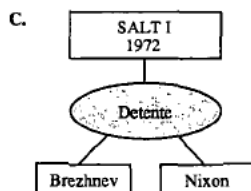
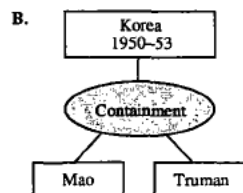
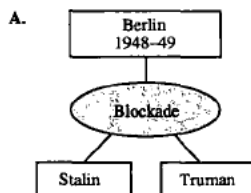
The fact that 69.6% of all students (86.8% of those students achieving the standard of excellence) answered question 41 correctly suggests that they were able to establish the historical context of the cartoon by successfully applying their knowledge base to the visual clues presented.

Many of these same students (63.2% of all students and 92.2% of those achieving the standard of excellence) chose the correct response for Question 42. This suggests that they were able to associate the meaning of the old "proverb" with Hitler's escalation of threats against Poland and his perception of Great Britain's likely diplomatic response based on past experience.

As has often been reported, the achievement results from these questions (and similar ones throughout the examination) are a credit to the critical thinking skills and grasp of knowledge demonstrated by many Grade 12 Alberta social studies students.

41. The historical context of this cartoon was
- * A. Great Britain pledging to support Poland against German attack
 - B. Hitler and Mussolini contemplating an alliance with Stalin
 - C. Mussolini contemplating an invasion of Ethiopia
 - D. British threats if Italian sovereignty were violated
42. The context of the cartoon suggests that Hitler's confidence in the old "proverb" is **most** likely based on his appraisal of Great Britain's
- * A. conciliatory stance adopted at Munich
 - B. belief that the Nazis would keep their word
 - C. dependence on Soviet support against Germany
 - D. tradition of strong resistance to German aggression

55. Which of the following diagrams illustrates a relationship that is **inaccurate**?



Question 55 required students to categorize specific information shown in four separate diagrams and is classified as a Synthesis/Evaluation question for Topic B. This question proved to be difficult, with only 53.6% of all students answering correctly. However, 83.3% of those achieving the standard of excellence responded correctly. This difficulty level may be explained by the type and level of thinking skills and the application of knowledge required for students to arrive at the correct response. Students had to sort out and to judge as inaccurate or accurate the connections among key historical events, people, and relevant social studies concepts.

Part B: Written Response

The results for the written-response section of the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination are tabulated according to the percentage of students achieving at each level (1 to 5) in each of the scoring categories. Each scoring category assesses somewhat different skills; consequently, individual students' scores are likely to vary from one category to another. Those students who achieve at or above the standard of excellence (80%) on the written-response section tend to have scores of **4 Proficient** or **5 Excellent** for all scoring categories. Students meeting the acceptable standard (50%) on the written-response section tend to have scores of **3 Satisfactory** or greater for most scoring categories but may produce **2 Limited** work or less for one or two categories.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignment and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the **3 Satisfactory** level. The scoring guides that describe proficiency levels are in the 1997–98 *Social Studies 30 Information Bulletin*.

The written-response section contributes 30% of the total examination mark. Students are required to write one complete and unified essay in which they discuss the importance and complexity of an issue and rationally defend their position by using supportive, relevant evidence. The organization of arguments should show evidence of logical thought that should persuade the reader. Students are expected to make use of their critical and creative thinking skills to demonstrate complex and independent thought.

Part B: Written Response has a total value of 30 marks: 10 marks each for *Defence of Position* and *Quality of Examples*, and five marks each for *Exploration of the Issue* and *Quality of Language and Expression*. The average raw score mean for Part B was 17.2 out of 30. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to the provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

It should be noted that beginning in January 1995, a two-marker system was adopted for marking Part B; this means that it is now possible for students to be awarded marks that are midway between scoring criteria. (See the following table.)

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
		Excellent		Proficient		Satisfactory		Limited		Poor	Ins*
		5	4.5	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	1	
Exploration of the Issue	5	1.9	2.7	8.6	12.6	25.6	22.6	18.3	5.4	2.0	0.3
Defence of Position	10	1.7	2.7	9.5	13.2	25.9	22.4	17.8	4.8	1.7	0.3
Quality of Examples	10	1.7	2.8	8.3	12.1	23.3	20.9	20.1	7.2	3.4	0.3
Quality of Language and Expression	5	2.3	3.5	11.7	16.2	38.7	16.8	8.3	1.6	0.5	0.3

* **Ins** (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded a **Satisfactory** standard of performance.

Topic A

Some people believe that governments have a responsibility to protect the public good by regulating the activities of the private sector in the economy. Others support deregulation, believing that government interference in the economy is ultimately counterproductive.

To what extent should governments regulate the private sector to protect the public interest?

In your essay, take and defend a position on this issue.

Topic B

Some people believe that every nation has the sovereign right to formulate domestic and foreign policy without external interference. Others believe that some nations, by virtue of their status and power, are legitimately entitled to exert influence over the domestic and foreign policies of lesser states.

To what extent are great powers justified in exerting influence over the affairs of lesser states?

In your essay, take and defend a position on this issue.

Examiners' Comments

The results of the written component for the January 1998 examination showed a comparable and encouraging average score (17.2/30) consistent with those achieved provincially in January and June 1997 and in 1995 and 1996. These are amongst the highest average scores achieved provincially since the inception of diploma examinations in 1984.

Students' writing continues to show a consistency of approach in the presentation of well-argued and well-organized papers. There are fewer students being awarded insufficient, poor, and very limited marks. As one teacher-marker commented, "More students are taking the time to explore the issue and create a suitable context for their papers." Many students, as well, made effective use of ideas and information from the multiple-choice section of the examination. It was also generally felt by the markers that students are composing lengthier papers, many of which exhibit a welcome grasp of course content. A number of markers also pointed out that some students, whether writing on Topic A or B, after initially grappling with the issue under discussion and revealing some uncertainty and hesitancy as to the direction of their discourse, would suddenly demonstrate comfort with, and internationalization of, the topic and finish quite strongly. This development suggests the importance of a continuing instructional focus on reflection and preplanning.

Many students continue to draw extensive and appropriate evidence from both contemporary and historical examples that often enhance the quality and interest level of their essays. For example, with Topic A, a number of students made reference to the market economy—from that theoretically envisaged by Adam Smith to that in practice in Alberta today. They considered such a market economy's regulation through a minimum wage,

product safety, and environmental standards. With Topic B, many students referred to various great power actions that challenged the sovereignty of lesser states by using examples that spanned the 20th century. Such essays often used a survey approach and revealed writers who qualified their positions; for instance, they explained that the actions of great powers were sometimes justified (the Gulf War) and sometimes not (the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan).

It was felt by many markers that some students dealing with Topic A confused government intervention with government regulation and failed to grasp the importance of the issue in terms of protecting the public interest or common good. (Some students went so far as to consider the "public interest" as those things that interest the public). The result was often conceptual confusion that led to long, descriptive essays that simply compared different kinds of economic systems. "Should governments regulate the private sector?" became "Should governments intervene in an economy?" Students must be cautioned against treating essay topics as set pieces. They must be encouraged to deal with the topic under discussion or suffer the consequences of lower marks.

In dealing with Topic B, many students appropriately applied relevant course content in defending their positions, and many demonstrated an excellent understanding of such key and applicable concepts as sovereignty, spheres of influence, self-determination, and imperialism. Too many students, however, chose to confine themselves to a restricted definition of great power influence over lesser states as that of military intervention alone. They failed to discuss or consider less overt forms of influence such as cultural, economic, and diplomatic intrusions. Markers also commented about the surprising number of students who stumbled over the concept of "great power," sometimes assigning such a designation to international organizations such as the United Nations or the International Monetary Fund.

Students achieving the acceptable standard were able to express an adequate understanding of the complexity and significance of an issue. These writers often recognized the principles underlying different viewpoints associated with an issue and generally established a historical or contemporary frame of reference for an issue's importance.

Students achieving the standard of excellence perceptively investigated the complexity and significance of the issue, often throughout the fabric of their response. Such students were comfortable revealing to the reader what they genuinely thought, rather than attempting to write what they felt the reader wanted to hear.

As in previous administrations, many students demonstrated an awareness that a stronger position paper is developed by establishing a basis for each argument or reason and then applying specific historical and contemporary examples as supportive evidence for each argument. Students achieving the acceptable standard supported their position with several adequate arguments. Although these arguments lacked in elaboration and depth of understanding, they were connected to the issue under discussion and to the position taken. Supportive evidence used by these writers to bolster an argument was generally relevant but not error-free, and more often general rather than specific in presentation. Such writers, despite making minor errors, demonstrated control of the conventions of language.

Students achieving below the acceptable standard did not link their examples in a meaningful way to their positions and often exhibited vagueness and confusion with key social studies concepts. They developed evidence primarily in descriptive terms, unloading as much data as they could recall and thus exhibiting little sense of its organization and applicability. Superficial descriptions of detail and the presentation of extraneous information resulted in lower scores. Students achieving below the satisfactory level demonstrated poor control of conventions.

Students achieving the standard of excellence composed powerful and forceful arguments that were firmly rooted in the application of germane, well-chosen evidence—evidence that in many instances supported a qualified position. Students at this level wrote carefully organized essays that were essentially free from errors in mechanics and grammar.

Generally, teachers were satisfied with the curricular fit of the two written-response questions. Based on a review of the essays submitted at the January 1998 writing of the Social Studies 30 Examination, Alberta's students have learned a great deal.

Comparison of Students' Results on Parts A and B

	Part A	Part B
A	25.9%	9.8%
B	28.7%	18.6%
C	27.9%	43.6%
F	17.5%	28.0%

While it is not intended that parts A and B of the examination be considered as separate examinations or that each part necessarily tests the same curricular objectives, it is interesting to see the distribution of student results.

In January 1998, considerably more students were awarded scores in the "A" category on Part A of the examination than on Part B, and considerably more students were awarded scores in the "F" category on Part B of the examination than on Part A. These scores do not signal a new phenomenon, but are consistent with results of recent administrations.

Readers are reminded that a *Samples of Student Writing* document, based on essays written from the January 1995 administrations, is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre, 12360 - 142 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5L 4X9, 403-427-5775 (Fax 422-9750). The order number is 308660-01 @ \$4.40 per booklet.

For further information, contact Barry Jonas (bjonas@edc.gov.ab.ca) or Elana Scraba (escraba@edc.gov.ab.ca) at the Student Evaluation Branch at 427-0010. To call toll-free from outside of Edmonton, dial 310-0000.

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